



NEWSLETTER

SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF THE MILITARY

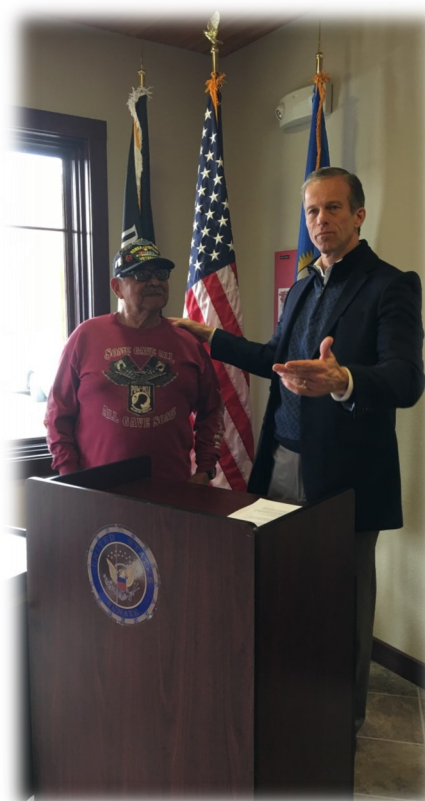


EDDIE PINA PRESENTED MEDALS

Eddie Pina, a veteran of both the Korean and Vietnam Conflicts, received long-overdue awards from U.S. Sen. John Thune last week in Rapid City.

Recently, officials discovered that Pina's military discharge documents did not include his service in the Korean War. In fixing the mistake, Pina was awarded additional medals and awards.

Pina was awarded the Korean Defense Service Award, the Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross, the Korean Service Medal, United Nations Service Medal, National Defense Medal 2nd Award, Parachutist Badge, Master Parachutist Badge, Army Good Conduct Medal 4th Award, Combat Infantryman Badge 2nd Award, Vietnam Service Medal with 3 bronze service stars, Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal with Device 1960, and Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm Unit Citation 2nd award.



SDDVA
Secretary

Larry Zimmerman created a shadow box with all of the medals for Senator John Thune to present to Eddie.



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MESSAGE FROM SECRETARY ZIMMERMAN

It's that time of the year when we are rushing off to the card shop, candy store and flower shops to find the perfect Valentine's Day gift for our loved ones. It's also my favorite time of the year to visit Mount Rushmore and pay tribute to four great heroes who are carved into the mountainside in the Black Hills.

In his own words, master carver Gutzon Borglum, says he selected George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, and Theodore Roosevelt to commemorate the founding, growth, preservation and development of the United States of America. As I sit at the base of Mount Rushmore, I can't help but ponder on the many chapters of American history that these four men were a part of – Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, purchase of the Louisiana Territory, construction of the Panama Canal, ensuring the rights of the working man, the American Revolutionary War, the Civil War, preservation of the union, and abolishing of slavery. Accomplishments that enriched all our lives.



One of my favorite Abraham Lincoln quotes is "Honor to the soldier and sailor everywhere, who bravely bears his country's cause. Honor, also, to the citizen who cares for his brother in the field and serves, as he best can, the same cause."

That quote causes me to think about all the care we provide our veterans at the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home. Our Home stands as a tribute to our heroes who answered their country's call to arms. We provide our heroes with high quality, long-term care and our warm, friendly, and compassionate staff are dedicated to the health and welfare of our heroes.

I challenge all of you to visit our website and take a virtual tour of this state-of-the-art facility (<http://vetaffairs.sd.gov/veteranshome/Features.aspx>). Every veteran has a private room with a private bath. The rooms are organized into neighborhoods. Amongst the neighborhoods is our beautiful Town Square which is comprised of a library, game room, chapel, post office, barber/beauty shop, pharmacy, gift shop, and bistro. We have on-site physical, speech, and occupational therapists.

Please call our team (605-745-5127) to learn more about the home and the admission criteria. We are here to serve those who have served us all.

In 2014 we launched the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home Endowment Fund to enhance and maintain the quality of life for our residents at the home. The goal is to build a \$3 million permanent endowment. The investment income from the fund will be used for activities for the veterans, robotics, new medical equipment, a columbarium, and a veterans' memorial garden to name a few. You can learn more about the fund at: <https://sdcommunityfoundation.org/for-donors/find-funds/michael-j-fitzmaurice-state-veterans-home-endowment-fund/>

We believe this fund embodies those 17 great words that Abraham Lincoln used in his inaugural address – "To care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan."

There is something about military service that creates a bond between veterans that no one else can fully understand. The fact that we fought together and survived together is a bond that will never be broken and will never be exhausted.

VIETNAM VETERANS ARTWORK COMES HOME

Galen A. Brown, native South Dakotan and a Vietnam U.S. Marine Corp Purple Heart Recipient will be honored by a retrospective of his artwork at the Warren Lee Center for the Arts, Vermillion, South Dakota. The show runs March 4-April 4 with a reception on March 23, 2018.

Galen Brown served two tours of duty as a sniper. He enlisted in 1965 and was wounded in action in Hue, 1968.

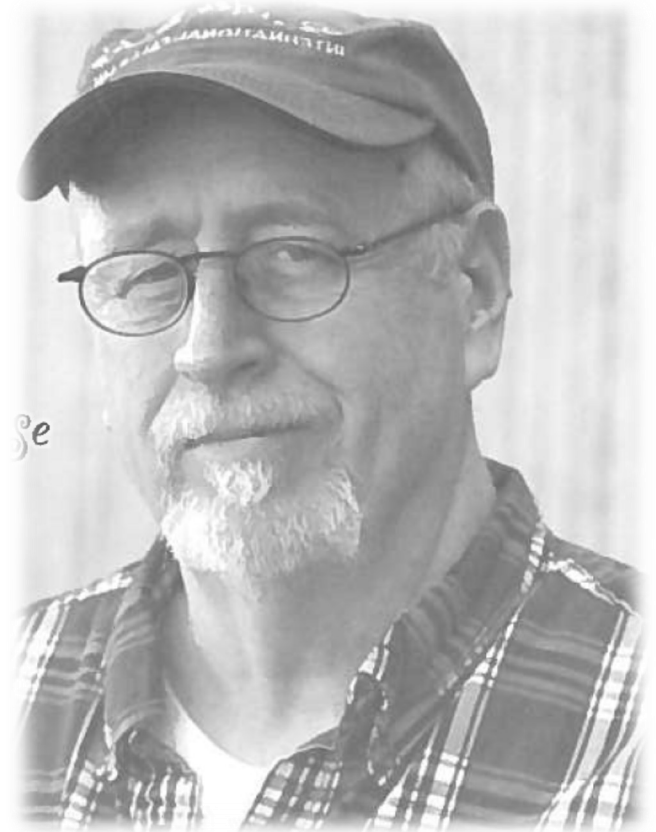
His journey as an artist began after returning from war and ended with his passing in 2013. The show "Shapes and Shadows" is a collection of works from his 50-year span as an artist. His series of works delve into the shapes and shadows of what he observed. Whether it was the shapes related to war and peace, the shapes of justice and injustice, and even the shapes related to his own cancer; his goal was to challenge the viewers to think.

Kay Adkins Brown, curator of the collection, states, "In March of 1968, Galen came home to Dell Rapids, as a wounded warrior. It seems fitting that on this 50-year anniversary his art returns. His experiences in Vietnam, like many others, left an emotional wound. Over the years I knew Galen, his art was his vehicle for healing. I believe at his passing he had come to many resolutions. This show is an opportunity for others to experience this journey."

The retrospective is a selection of works on paper from fifteen series created by the artist. "Boots" is a drawing of those he wore in Vietnam. Between 2004-2008, Galen Brown used the American Flag as the shape of his subjects. The piece "2 Flag" was featured on the Story Wall from Minnesota Public Television's Vietnam. In each of his pieces there is a subtle reference to his service in Vietnam.

Galen Brown was a 1963 graduate of Dell Rapids, South Dakota, received his MFA from the University of South Dakota, was a guest lecturer and Printmaker of the Frogman Press, and was Artist-in-Residence at the Oscar Howe Gallery and Mount Marty College in Yankton in the 1980's. His work has shown and is in collections in Germany, Italy, France, India and throughout the United States. His work can be viewed at:

<https://galenbrownartcollection.com/jessica-series/wjbnmlauaz3nw7m7lz1hw77dlurp8o>



USS SOUTH DAKOTA

The PCU SOUTH DAKOTA has finalized the design of the official crest for the USS SOUTH DAKOTA (SSN 790). The new symbol includes a wide variety of imagery representing South Dakota and its history, including:

- Mount Rushmore National Memorial, the state's iconic destination and our nation's Shrine of Democracy
- Pheasant feathers representing the state bird
- Coyotes, the state animal and a symbol used by Native American tribes
- A sun shape used on the original 1909 South Dakota state flag
- 13 stars representing the 13 battles fought by the USS SOUTH DAKOTA battleship during World War II
- A T-Rex skull (hidden around Mt. Rushmore), a reference to "Sue" – the largest and most complete T-Rex Skelton found in South Dakota
- A rattlesnake depicting stealth and fast attack readiness
- The boat's motto (in Latin), "Under the sea we rule"

In 2016, 72 students and adults across South Dakota participated in a contest to design the crest. The Commissioning Committee used many of the elements from the contest finalists in the final design. The Commander and Crew of the boat, as well as the PCU SOUTH DAKOTA Commissioning Committee wish to thank all those who participated in the crest contest.



NATIONAL CEMETERY SCHEDULING OFFICE UPDATE

The National Cemetery Administration relies on all of us to assist in meeting the burial needs of veterans and family members as they honor them with final resting places in national shrines. They realize that in the past month it has become increasingly difficult to get through to their scheduling office to receive eligibility determinations and to schedule burials. They apologize for the delays you are experiencing and they are actively working to improve this service.

To be more responsive to our customers, the National Cemetery Administration is taking immediate action to address this issue and reduce the delays and dropped calls. These interim measures will be used until they restore their normal response time to all your calls. Please continue to call the national scheduling office phone number (1-800-535-1117) to schedule interments.

They apologize that they have not been able to provide you the highest quality of customer service that veterans and their families deserve. They are working diligently to correct this situation. They will provide updates as soon as possible and appreciate your patience.

SDNG DINING OUT

The South Dakota National Guard hosted its 2018 Dining-Out at the Ramkota Hotel and Convention Center in Pierre, Feb. 1.

The annual event brings together Guardsmen from across the state for a formal evening to honor the organization's history and to recognize individual and unit achievements from the past year.

The atmosphere, while formal, includes deep-rooted traditions which lighten the mood and provide both members and guests not only plenty of laughs, but a chance to learn some of the organization's history, traditions and an opportunity to recognize individual and unit achievements.

A video highlighting the many accomplishments made by the men and women of the SDNG in 2017 was shown in addition to comments from Gov. Dennis Daugaard and Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, the SDNG adjutant general. The National Guard also recognized a family, an employer and a public servant with awards recognizing their contributions to the SDNG mission.

The awards portion of the evening began by presenting RE-NEW Energy, Inc. with the South Dakota Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Pro Patria Award.

The Pro Patria Award is presented annually to one South Dakota employer who provides exceptional support of our national defense through leadership practices and personnel policies that support employees serving in the National Guard or Reserve.



The SDNG next awarded the Williamson Militiaman Award to retired Col. Steve Harding, who now serves as the deputy secretary of the South Dakota Department of Military and as the mayor of Pierre.

The Williamson Militiaman Award, established in 1987 by Maj. Gen. Ronald F. Williamson, recognizes an individual who exemplifies the spirit of the citizen-Soldier or Airman as shown by their community leadership, their support of the National Guard and the defense of the country.

To conclude the awards portion of the evening, The Adjutant General's Family

Award was presented to Shawn and Jodie Greer, along with their children, Alexis and Haley.

The award recognizes family members who support their service members in a truly exemplary manner while managing family, careers, or even hardship, all the while not seeking recognition for their sacrifices.



SD VIETNAM VETERAN'S & ERA REUNION

Community leaders in Mitchell, South Dakota, have been planning for months for the "South Dakota Vietnam Veteran's and Era Reunion."

The Reunion will be held February 23-25, 2018, at the Ramada Inn in Mitchell. Room reservations can be made by calling the Ramada (605-996-6501) and asking for the Vietnam Veterans Reunion block (\$79).

Registration opens at 4:00 pm (CT) on Friday, Feb. 23, followed by a soup/sandwich supper from 6:00-8:00 pm (CT) and music by "Mega Sound" from 8:00-11:00 pm (CT).

Saturday morning registration opens again at 8:00 am (CT). Lunch will be served at the American Legion Post from 12:00—1:30 pm (CT)

The rest of the events will be held at the Ramada Inn. From 2:00 pm—4:30 pm (CT) veterans will have an update on Agent Orange, followed by Happy Hour at 5:30 pm, banquet, auction and dance from 6:00 pm—closing.

Sunday morning a memorial service will be held at the Ramada at 10:00 am (CT).

For more information or to register to attend, please call 605-996-2211 or 605-999-2321.



BIG SHOUT OUT TO DAKOTA'S REGIONAL OFFICE

SDDVA Secretary Larry Zimmerman and Deputy Secretary Aaron Polard attended a recognition ceremony at the VA this week. The Sioux Falls Regional Office was recognized as "Top Performance in the Nation" for this quarter. Jamie Manker, VA Acting Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Benefits, presented the award to Shawn Bohn, director of the Dakotas Regional Office.

Prior to the presentation Manker visited the SDDVA Claims Office and thanked the SDDVA team for their dedicated service and visited with them about decision rating claims.



UPCOMING EVENTS

2018

Feb 11—VABHHCS Four Chaplain Service—St. Francis Catholic Church—1:30 pm (MT)
Feb 16-18—American Legion Mid Winter Conference—Oacoma
Feb 23-25—Vietnam Veterans & Era Reunion—Ramada Inn—Mitchell
Mar 4-8—National VFW Conference—Washington, DC
Mar 6—SFVAHCS Town Hall—Sioux Falls VA Auditorium—5:00 pm (CT)
Mar 9—VABHHCS VSO Congressional Forum—VFW Post 1273—Rapid City—10:00 am (MT)
Mar 13—VABHHCS Veteran Town Hall and Outreach—Newcastle Senior Center—8:00 am (MT)
Mar 13—VABHHCS Veteran Town Hall and Outreach—Sundance Senior Center—1:00 pm (MT)
Mar 22—Veterans Legal Services—Watertown National Guard Armory—9:00 am—3:00 pm (CT)
Mar 23—Veterans Legal Services—Sioux Falls DAV—9:00 am—3:00 pm (CT)
Apr 18—Veterans Council Meeting—PVA Headquarters—Sioux Falls—10:00 am (CT)
Apr 27-29—DAV State Convention—The Lodge—Deadwood
Jun 7-10—American Legion State Convention—Spearfish
Jun 14-17—VFW State Convention—Sioux Falls
Jul 14-17—DAV National Convention—Reno, NV
Jul 21-25—VFW National Convention—Kansas City, MO
Jul 26—VABHHCS Veterans Town Hall—Post 8 American Legion—Pierre
Aug 20-24—SDDVA Benefits School—Ramkota—Pierre
Aug 24-30—American Legion National Convention—Minneapolis, MN
Oct 10—SD Veterans Commission Meeting—Soldiers and Sailors Building—Pierre—8:00 am (CT)



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